

VZCZCXRO6633
PP RUEHROV
DE RUEHKH #0937/01 1081536
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 181536Z APR 06
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2399
INFO RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
RUEHNJ/AMEMBASSY NDJAMENA 0036
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC 0053
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC 0074
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC 0174

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 000937

SIPDIS

AIDAC
SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF/SPG, PRM, AND ALSO PASS USAID/W
USAID FOR SUDAN TASK FORCE, AF/EA, DCHA
NAIROBI FOR USAID/DCHA/OFDA AND USAID/REDSO
ROME FOR FODAG
GENEVA FOR NKYLOH
NSC FOR JMELINE
USUN FOR TMALY
BRUSSELS FOR PLERNER
ABUJA PLEASE PASS C. HUME

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [PINS](#) [EAID](#) [KAWC](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: Sudan - Visit to Port Sudan

Summary

¶1. Humanitarian conditions in Red Sea State have not changed much since 2005, when USAID last made an extensive visit to this northern state to visit programs in Mohammed Qol and areas north of Port Sudan. The GNU continues to limit humanitarian staff visits to the area, and now requires all humanitarian workers, including local staff, to obtain travel permits before going outside Port Sudan. Despite limitations, WFP is expanding its beneficiaries and shifting from general distributions to food for recovery, food for education and other development oriented purposes. A conference is planned for April 30 - May 1 with donors, UN agencies, NGOs, civil society, and the government to map out a recover/development program for the eastern region generally.

Humanitarian Situation

¶2. USAID visited Port Sudan April 8-9, 2006, for a quick update on the humanitarian situation. Since 2005, working conditions for humanitarian workers in Red Sea State (RSS) have deteriorated. Humanitarian space is more closed than before, with GNU security officials requiring travel permits even for well known local organizations such as SOS Sahel and ACCORD to leave the city. OXFAM, which has worked in RSS for over 20 years, has been blocked when trying to bring in technical expatriate expertise to assist with their livelihoods and food security programming. More recently, the GNU has questioned the application of the SOFA (status of forces) agreement to UN agencies and has consequently blocked all UN staff from traveling outside Port Sudan without a travel permit. The SOFA, a bilateral agreement between the Sudanese government and UNMIS, is designed to allow unimpeded access for UN agencies to perform humanitarian activities. The UN on principle, is refusing to adhere to this, hence all staff are grounded.

¶3. Despite these challenges, the UN and its partners in Red Sea State are attempting to expand the reach of programs, and through persistence and dialogue with authorities have made some progress. IRC, recipient last year of a USD 2 million grant from USAID for eastern Sudan, has only in the last month received permission to begin project activities in the Tokar Delta. WFP, although not permitted to travel outside Port Sudan due to the SOFA issued noted above, has made some adjustments in their program in response to the May 2005 TANGO report, which provided critical information on the livelihoods of people in the East. Significantly, there is no general food distribution this year, but rather all food programmed is linked to community activities (food for recovery) or health (food for TB patients) or education (school feeding). Of particular note is the increase this year from 25,000 to 35,000 of the number of children in school feeding in the state with emphasis on girls education.

¶4. A USAID grant to IRC that began in 2005, in which three local organizations benefited from sub-grants, will end in April 2006. The grantees, ACCORD, SOS Sahel, and Sudanese Red Crescent, all express the desire to continue the work in micro-finance, farming, re-stocking, and water harvesting in the northern zones of the state (Sinkat and Hileib). Although implementation of programs is challenged by travel restrictions noted above, the NGOS have formed village committees, including women's committees, and have made progress in helping diversify rural livelihoods. In Rural Port Sudan and Tokar, IRC is rehabilitating health centers and supporting grass roots

KHARTOUM 00000937 002 OF 002

projects, such as water reservoirs, that are identified by the communities. USAID visited with a community group that expressed strong pleasure and pride in the work they had achieved with IRC support. As state support to rural areas has yet to be visible, these modest NGO-led initiatives remain a critical element for change in the east, but need to be bolstered by more seriously coordinated and funded interventions.

¶5. In this vein, the UN, in collaboration with government and international and national NGOs working in the East, will host a conference on development challenges in the East at the end of April or early May in Port Sudan. The conference will point out that while international assistance has flowed to the East for the past decades, interventions have been short term and emergency focused, although not addressing the root causes of conflict. The goal of the conference is to "develop a common vision and commitment for coordinated strategies between international development actors, local civil society organizations and the two state governments (RSS and Kassala) to begin the process of achieving meaningful change in poverty reduction and conflict transformation in the Red Sea and Kassala States." Expected outputs of the conference include: (a) a shared knowledge of past failures and successes of interventions for poverty and conflict resolution in the Red Sea and Kassala States; (b) a planned vision for strategic coordinated activities to address priority issues for poverty reduction and conflict transformation; (c) increased commitment to recovery and development initiatives in the Red Sea and Kassala States on the part of donors.

STEINFELD